

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 011542Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2500
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2149

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SY, UNSC
SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA REACTS WITH DISAPPOINTMENT TO ADJOURNMENT
UNSC DEBATE ON SEC GEN WALDHEIM'S ME REPORT

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. SYRIAN MEDIA DISPLAYED DISAPPOINTMENT AND OSTENSIBLE
PUZZLEMENT THAT ARABS AND NON-ALIGNED STATES UNABLE WIN U.S.
ACQUIESCENCE FOR THEIR STATEMENT DURING DEBATE OF UNSYG'S ME
REPORT.

2. FIRST EDITORIAL ON SUBJECT SINCE DEBATE ADJOURNED
APPEARED IN MARCH 31 AL-BAATH WHICH ARGUED THAT IT WAS URGENT
TO ELIMINATE FACTORS THREATENING TO CAUSE NEW OUTBREAK
OF FIGHTING IN AREA ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF "OBSTINATE ISRAELI
ATTITUDE". EDITORIAL CHARGED THAT U.S. BY "PREVENTING
COLLECTIVE UNSC STATEMENT SUPPORTING PALESTINIANS HAD
CONTRIBUTED TO MAKING SITUATION IN AREA TENSE ONE. THIS
CONFLICTS WITH AMERICA'S GREAT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR
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INTERNATIONAL PEACE, AS IT IS ONE OF TWO MAJOR POWERS, AND
IT ALSO CONFLICTS WITH STATEMENTS OF PRES. CARTER AND US
OFFICIALS CONCERNING US PEACE EFFORTS." EDITORIAL WENT ON
TO URGE " SPEEDY RESUMPTION UNSC DEBATE AND ADOPTION OF
DECISIVE POSITION REGARDING ESTABLISHING JUST PEAC IN
AREA AS WAY TO WHICH PROGRESS TOWARD ULTIMATE PEACE SETTLEMENT
BASED TN NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE ACCELERATED."

3. THIS FOLLOWED BY SIMILAR COMMENTARY ON APRIL 1, IN WHICH THAWRA ASKED: "WHY HAS US AVOIDED CONSISTENCY AT THE UNSC WITH PRES. CARTER'S DECLARATIONS, AND FOR HOW LONG WILL IT ASSUME TWO POSES?" IT CLAIMED US POSITION PUT AMB YOUNG IN DIFFICULT POSITION SINCE HE WAS NEITHER ABLE TO ADOPT AND DEFEND CARTER'S DECLARATIONS NOR TO REJECT AND ATTACK THEM. COLUMNIST CLAIMED US STILL HAD TO TRANSLATE ITS WORDS INTO ACTION. HE CALLED UPON US TO DEFINE MORE CLEARLY MEANING OF PALESTINIAN HOMELAND AND PEACE IN THE ME.

4. PRIOR TO CONVENING UNSC DEBATE ON SECGEN WALDHEIM'S REPORT, SEVERAL MINOR EDITORIALS HAD APPEARED IN SYRIAN PRESS CALLING FOR UNSC TO DEAL WITH "ISRAELI OBSTINANCY." DURING DEBATE SEVERAL ARTICLES COVERED SC SESSIONS INCLUDING LEAD ARTICLES MARCH 29 SUMMARIZING SPEECHES DELIVERED BY SYRIAN AMBASSADOR ALLAF AND PLO OBSERVER TERZI. ONE OF THESE ARTICLES PREDICTED THAT, "STATEMENT WOULD BE ADOPTED DIFFERING LITTLE FROM DRAFT OF NON-ALIGNED STATES OR ELSE DEBATE WOULD BE ADJOURNED UNTIL FURTHER CONTACTS COULD BE CONDUCTED." ARTICLE CHARGED THAT AIM OF US DRAFT STATEMENT WAS TO "PREVENT UNSC FROM TAKING EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO CONVENE MEPC AND TO MAKE ISRAEL ACCEPT UN RESOLUTIONS." IT STATED US DRAFT WAS CONFINED TO MERELY ACKNOWLEDGING SYG'S ME REPORT AND CALLING UPON HIM TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS. ARTICLE ENDED BY CALLING US PROPOSAL "FORM OF PRESSURE ON ONE SIDE (ARABS)." END UNCLASSIFIED
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5. COMMENT: OVERALL IMPRESSION CREATED BY PRESS COVERAGE AND EDITORIALS IS THAT SYRIANS FELT OBLIGED TO GO ALONG WITH EGYPTIAN/NON-ALIGNED EFFORTS BUT HAD LITTLE HOPE FROM OUTSET THAT STATEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH ARABS AND US COULD BE REACHED. SYRIA CONTINUES TO TAKE PESSIMISTIC VIEW ABOUT EXTENT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS PEACE WHICH CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED THIS YEAR AND REMAINS SUSPICIOUS OF US INTENTIONS.
MURPHY

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Sent Date: 01-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Disposition History: n/a
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